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#### Essay.

BY A. J. COCKROFT.

Feb. 61.—Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go unto perfection.

What were their evident attainments in Christian experience?

In what sense were they exhorted to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ?

What is meant by the term "perfection"?

Correct answers to these important questions will surely involve the recognition and suggestion of the main difficulties of the above passage, which I shall try to explain.

Then, what were their evident attainments in Christian experience?

By reading the last three verses of the preceding chapter, it may be seen that the apostle was addressing professors of Christianity, who by neglect of duty had become cold and indifferent to the higher demands of Christian service; and as a natural consequence they were dull of hearing.

Therefore he reproved them very severely, and urged upon them the sad effects of their disobedience to their Master, and tells them that "when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." So, the phrase, the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, throws light on what he meant by the principles of Christianity, as they evidently convey the same idea—both clearly involving recognition of the precedence of repentance and faith. These two graces—repentance and faith—as represented in the Scriptures as being first in order of time as well as in point of importance as connected with other graces or essential elements in the perfect formation and development of the Christian manhood. Consequently, Christ and the inspired writers gave greater prominence to these two doctrines—repentance and faith—than to any others, except the ones necessarily resulting from, and conditioned upon, the precedence of these. But wherever repentance and faith are mentioned together, repentance is first. Mark 1:15, says: "Repent and believe the gospel." Paul observed the same order: "Testifying both to Jews and Greeks repentance to God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Besides this, the Saviour himself plainly taught that repentance not only precedes but necessarily prepares for the effectual exercise of a saving faith. For He said to those who heard the preaching of John the Baptist, Matt 23:22, "Ye repent not afterward that ye might believe him," i. e., that they might believe John and, of course, be saved. Consequently we are said to be justified by faith. Showing that faith, as a medium, must precede the supernatural act of justification—although the same idea is conveyed by inexpressible words of Peter, who said to the Jews that God put his difference between them and us, "Therefore justify their hearts by faith." Their repentance and faith are the instrumental causes, or divinely appointed conditions upon which depend the promised operations of the Holy Spirit, in effecting our justification, pardon, remission, adoption and the use of the Holy Spirit. In confirmation of this, notice what Paul said to the Ephesians, 1:13: "In whom (Christ) also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." And as the "renewal" and the "renewal" are evidently simultaneous operations of the Holy Spirit, therefore regeneration occurs after the proper exercise of a saving faith, which works by love and pur-

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NO. 26.

#### THE VARIATIONS OF THE ROMAN CHURCH.

So, I conclude that those addressed by Paul had experienced the above named prerequisites to salvation; and from these he exhorted them to go on unto perfection. These prerequisites are, therefore very properly called "the principles of the doctrine of Christ."

2. I what sense were they exhorted to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ?

I answer briefly, that they were exhorted to leave them only in a qualified sense. Let me illustrate: A child first learns the letters of the alphabet, and then the nature and power of those letters, and how to use them.

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fusion, no hesitation, no discordant note, while with united voice they swell the "song of redeeming grace and dying love."

Heaven, too, has its alphabet and its progressive lessons as earth has. When God sends forth the angels to gather in his elect, with the message, "Child, your Father calls. Come home," then our first helpers are, Abba, Abba. Glorified spirits—it may be angels, or more probably prophets, apostles, evangelists; saints with whom we had mingled on earth, and to whom we had been bound in all the closest and fondest ties known to mortals—will be our instructors.

The mental alphabet may not be materially changed; only the days by which sin has here impeded our progress will be removed. Independently of sin a diversity of talent exists here—it may exist there. We shall be apt scholars there in proportion to aptitude here and to our acquisitions on earth. Nothing of knowledge gained here will be lost; nothing left behind. All of good, all of wisdom, all of knowledge, all of understanding will be transferred and will contribute to our progress there, just as mental discipline and acquired knowledge subserve the missionary to heathen lands in acquiring the meaning and pronunciation of a foreign language. By what mental process language will be acquired and knowledge gained I know not. But that it will not be intuitive is, I think, certain. God's operations in this world, in the universe, and throughout all worlds, as far as we can judge, are all in accordance with established laws. Is it then presumptions to suppose that the employments, the exercises, and the enjoyments of Heaven are conformed to rules or laws which God has provided? In seeking the knowledge of a foreign language, whether dead or living, our resort is to the vocabularies and grammars of the language; and where a nation has no written language, we must, by association, if at all, acquire their language. This I apprehend, will be the principle medium in the celestial world.

Whatever our nationality, race, condition, or language here, all will vanish away, be lost, sunk in the common brotherhood and fellowship, and absorbed in the redundancy of Heaven. Here in every study, in every science, in every art, there is a limit of perception and thought. Man has a prevision, it may be, of the perfect, but owing to the poverty of language he has no terms to express it. In Heaven there will be a perfect language, and every employment will attain its legitimate perfection, and while they all tend to exhibit the perfections of the divine character, they will serve at the same time to demonstrate the reality, the duration and the immutability of our happiness.

M. S. SITAK.

#### To the Baptists of Mississippi.

The Southern Baptist Convention at the last meeting gave utterance to the following expressions: "That the Board increase or greatly enlarge its Domestic Mission work, giving special attention to aiding important points; and again, 'two tract that a live-fire mission may be sent to the work of the Board, and induce heretofore more cheerful hearts and willing hands toward sustaining it.'"

The work can be enlarged only as the means for conducting it shall be increased. Will not the Baptists of Mississippi make this year a forward movement, and give the Board two thousand dollars to enable them to give the gospel to the hundreds of thousands in our own land who are destitute of it, and who can be reached by no other agency of our denomination? Your State Convention, at its late session, approved this request of the Board, and recommended that the amount be raised. The Board is anxious to enter the field at New Orleans. From other important centers, all over our Southern land, come earnest appeals for assistance. Will you not bring this matter, at the first opportunity, before your churches and associations? Will not the brethren who were at the Convention in Okolona see that the claims of this Board are not overlooked?

Wm. H. McIlwain, Cor. Sec. Marion, Ala.

Is death the last sleep? No, it is the last final awakening.—Walter Scott.

fusion, no hesitation, no discordant note, while with united voice they swell the "



With those changes, the

A close-up photograph of a weathered, light-colored wooden surface, possibly a door or wall. The wood has a vertical grain pattern and is heavily marked with numerous dark spots, stains, and signs of decay, including small holes and larger dark patches. The lighting is somewhat uneven, with a darker area at the bottom.


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